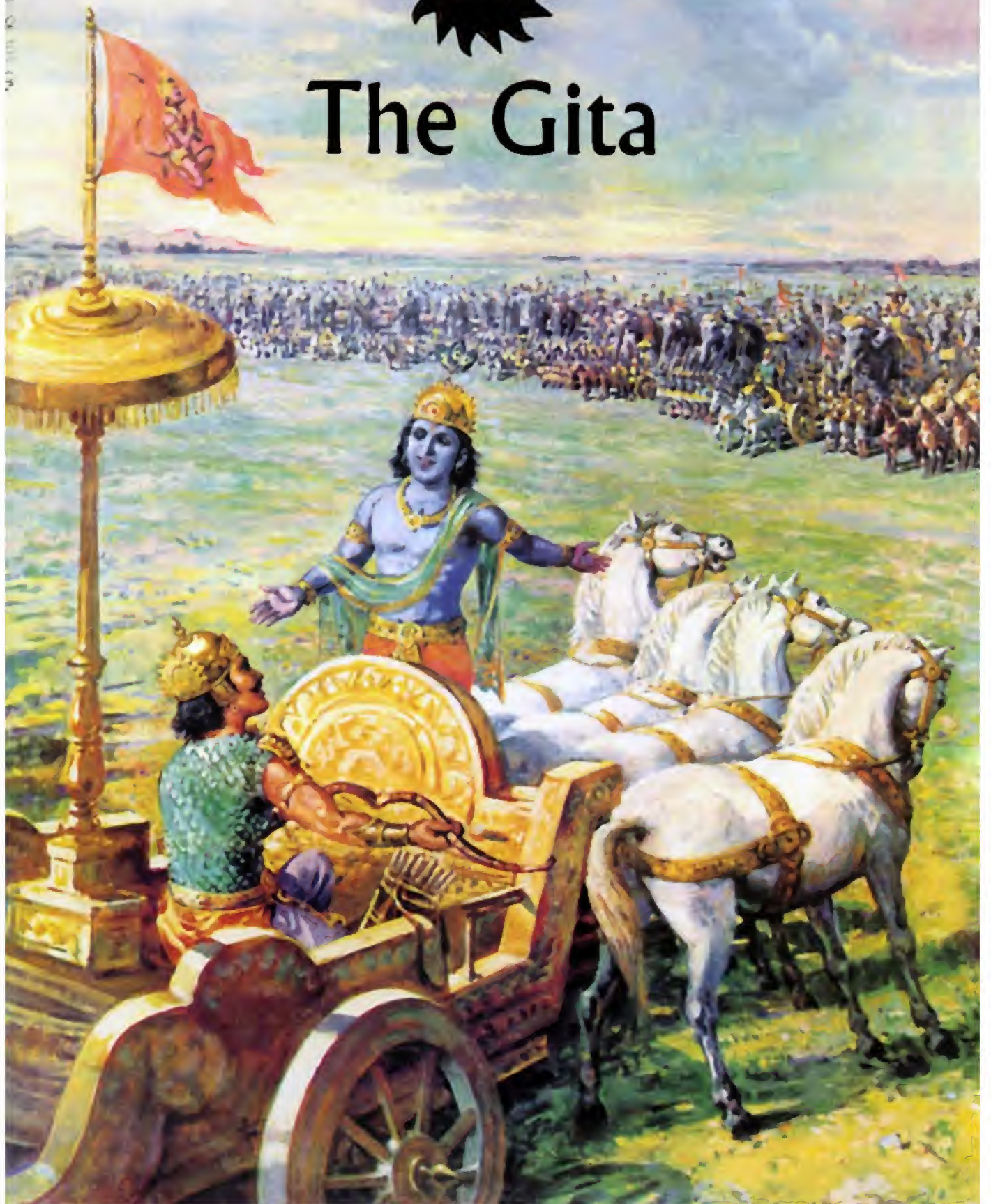




The Gita





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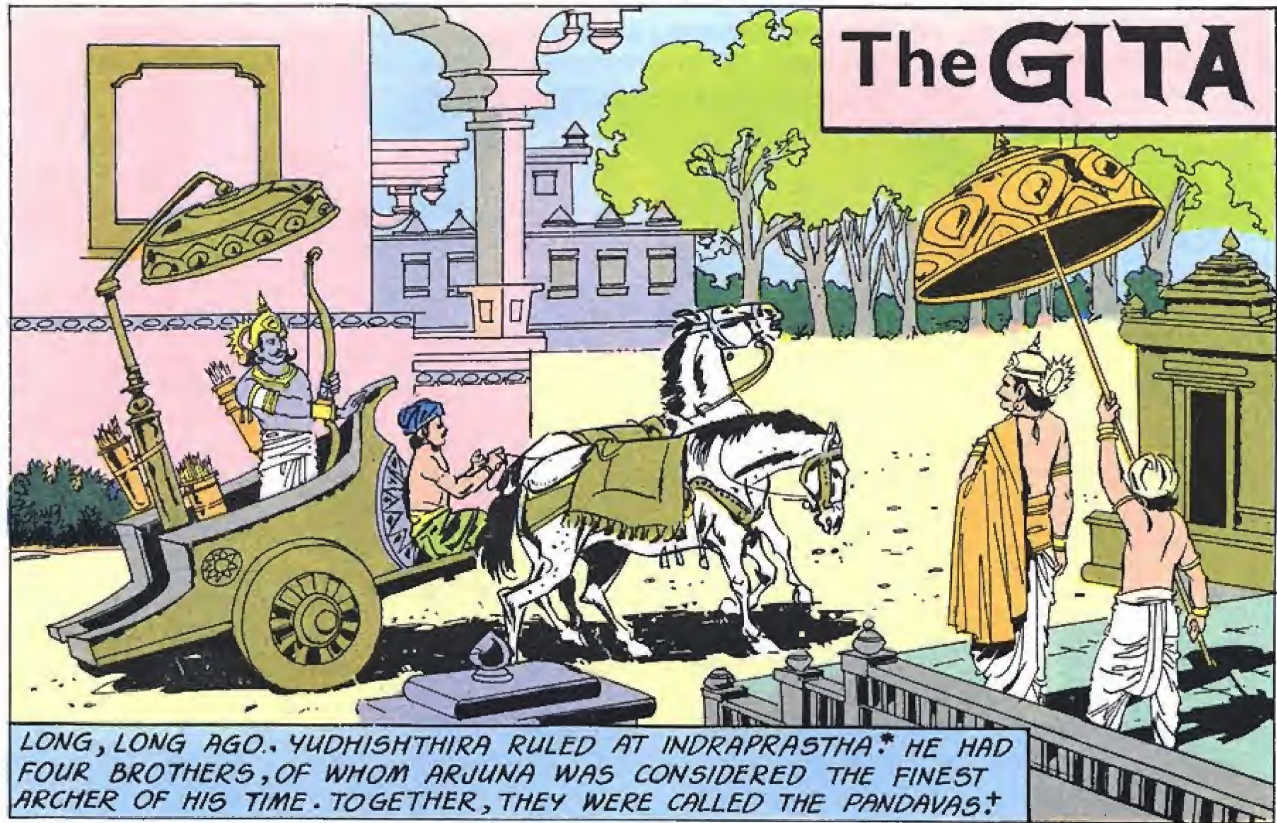
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The GITA



ONCE, YUDHISHTHIRA PERFORMED THE RAJASUYA SACRIFICE, TO WHICH KINGS AND PRINCES CAME FROM FAR AND NEAR. IT MEANT THAT THEY ACKNOWLEDGED HIM AS THE SUZERAIN OVER THEM ALL. THIS WAS POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF THE HELP GIVEN BY KRISHNA, THEIR MATERNAL COUSIN.

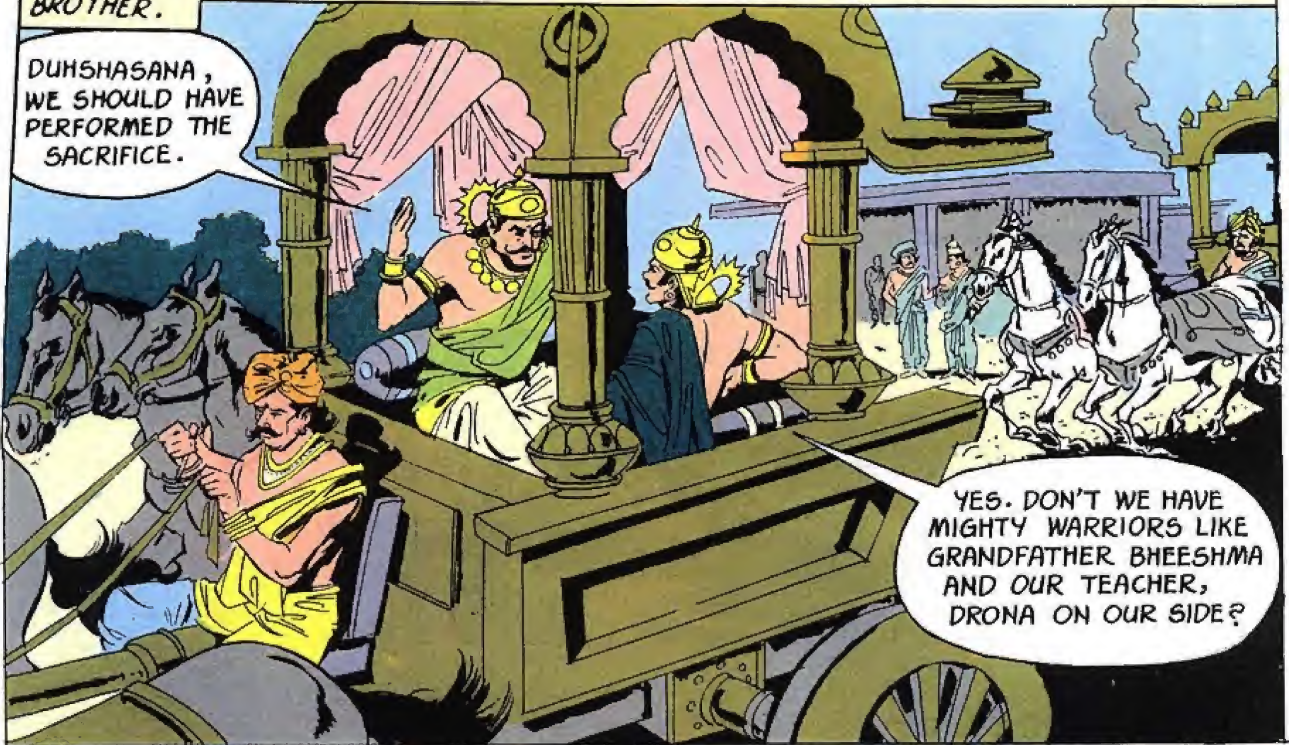


* NEAR MODERN DELHI.

† PATRONYMIC FROM PANDU, THEIR FATHER.

AFTER THE SACRIFICIAL CEREMONY, THE KINGS AND PRINCES LEFT FOR THEIR RESPECTIVE KINGDOMS. DURYODHANA RETURNED TO HASTINAPURA ALONG WITH DUHSHASANA, HIS BROTHER.

DUHSHASANA,
WE SHOULD HAVE
PERFORMED THE
SACRIFICE.



YES. DON'T WE HAVE
MIGHTY WARRIORS LIKE
GRANDFATHER BHEESHMA
AND OUR TEACHER,
DRONA ON OUR SIDE?

AFTER REACHING HIS CAPITAL, DURYODHANA WENT STRAIGHT TO HIS FATHER, DHRTA - RASHTRA, THE BLIND KING OF THE KAURAVAS.*

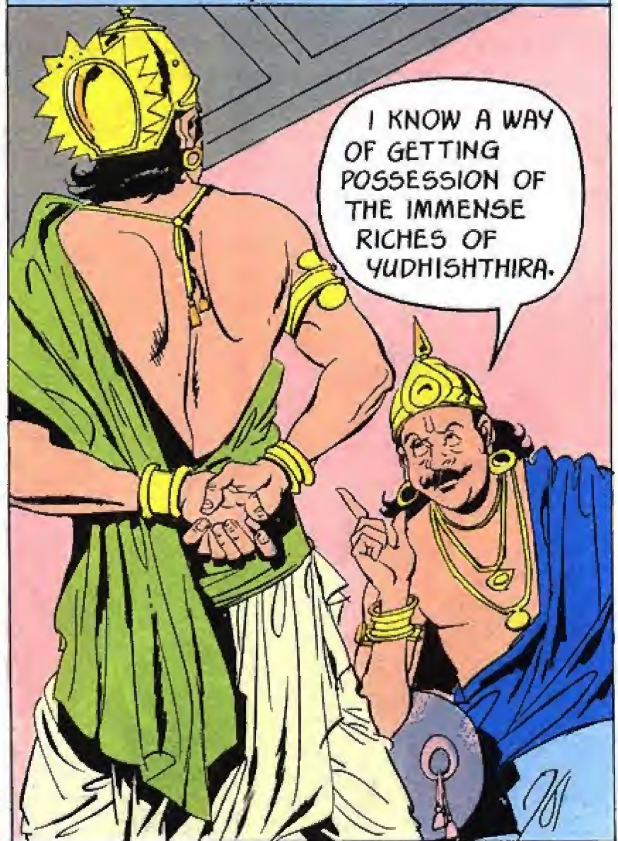
FATHER, EVER
SINCE I SAW YUDHI-
SHTHIRA'S PROSPERITY,
I HAVE HAD NO PEACE
OF MIND.

DURYODHANA, HE
IS YOUR COUSIN. YOU
MUST NOT ENVY HIM.

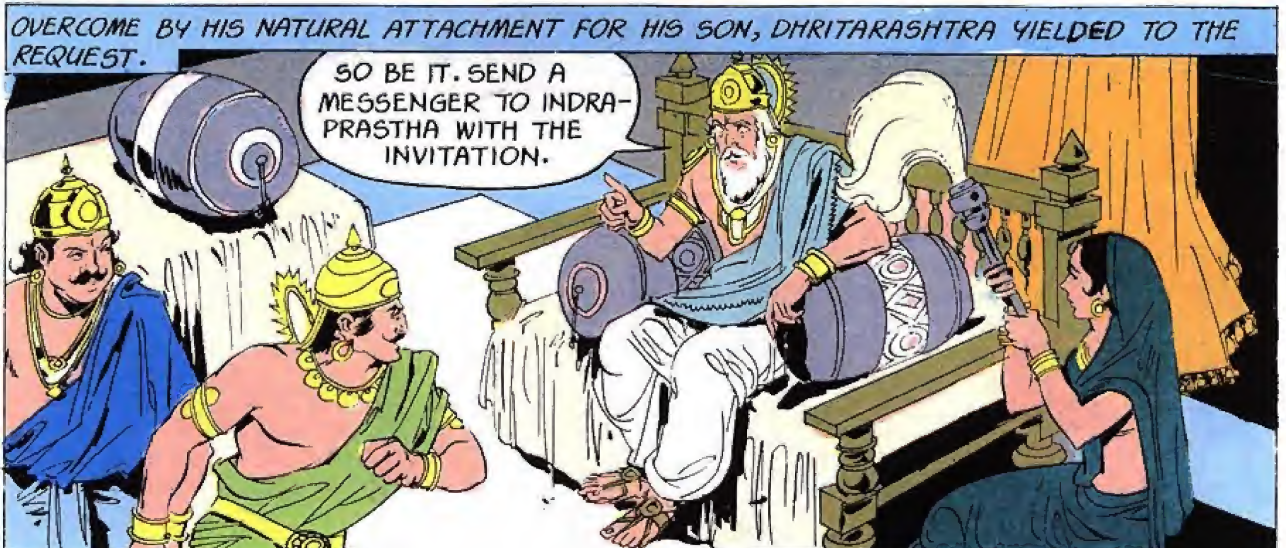


THE EVIL-MINDED SHAKUNI, DURYODHANA'S MATERNAL UNCLE, HAD A SUGGESTION.

I KNOW A WAY
OF GETTING
POSSESSION OF
THE IMMENSE
RICHES OF
YUDHISHTHIRA.



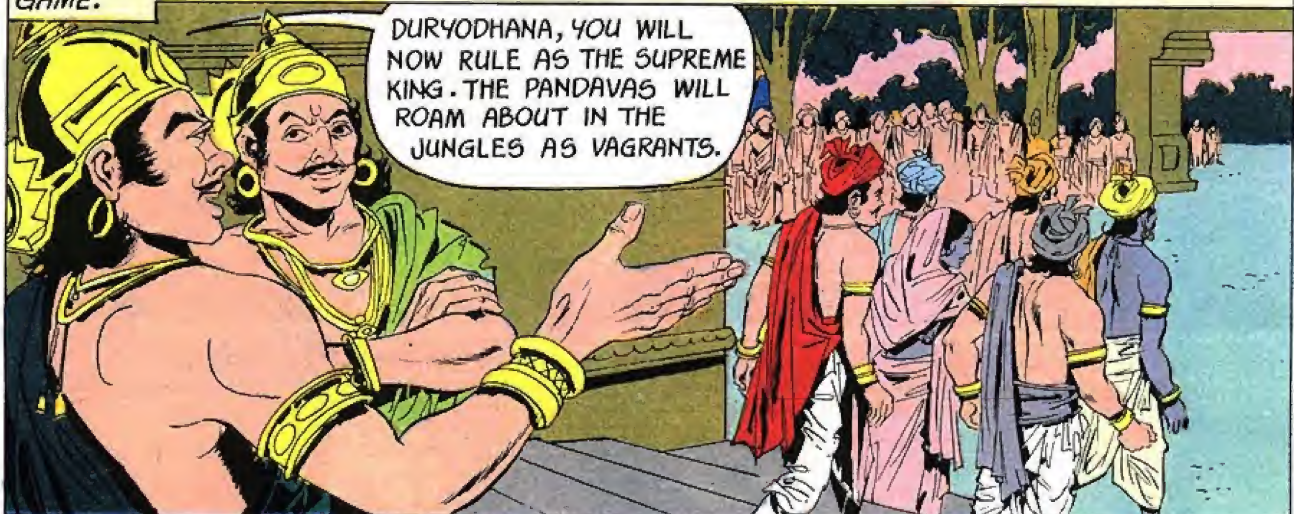
* PATRONYMIC FROM KURU, AN ANCESTOR.



AT THE INVITATION OF DHRTIARASHTRA, YUDHISHTHIRA AND HIS BROTHERS CAME TO HASTINAPURA, AND THE GAME BEGAN. THE STAKES WERE HEAVY. AFTER A LONG SESSION —



YUDHISHTHIRA NOT ONLY LOST THE KINGDOM, BUT WAS COMPELLED TO GO INTO EXILE FOR THIRTEEN YEARS, BECAUSE THIS TOO WAS PART OF THE PRICE FOR LOSING THE GAME.



DURYODHANA, YOU WILL NOW RULE AS THE SUPREME KING. THE PANDAVAS WILL ROAM ABOUT IN THE JUNGLES AS VAGRANTS.

AFTER COMPLETING THEIR PERIOD OF EXILE, THE PANDAVAS REACHED UPAPLAVYA.



WHAT SHOULD WE DO NOW?

NOW THAT WE HAVE FULFILLED ALL THE CONDITIONS, WE WILL DEMAND OUR KINGDOM BACK. BUT WE CAN NEGOTIATE ONLY FROM A POSITION OF STRENGTH. LET US, THEREFORE, WRITE TO OUR FRIENDS TO COME TO OUR HELP.

KINGS AND PRINCES FROM MANY PARTS OF INDIA CAME TO UPAPLAYA WITH THEIR ARMIES. KRISHNA TOO CAME.



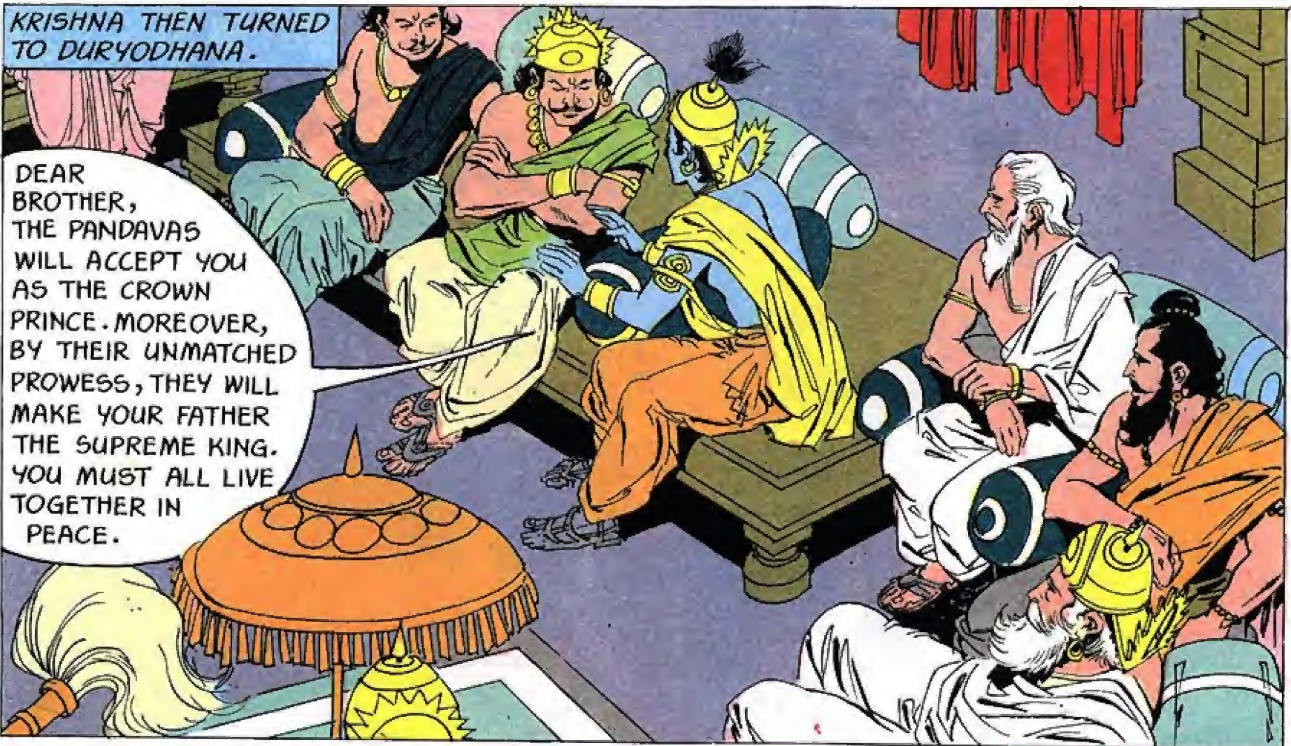
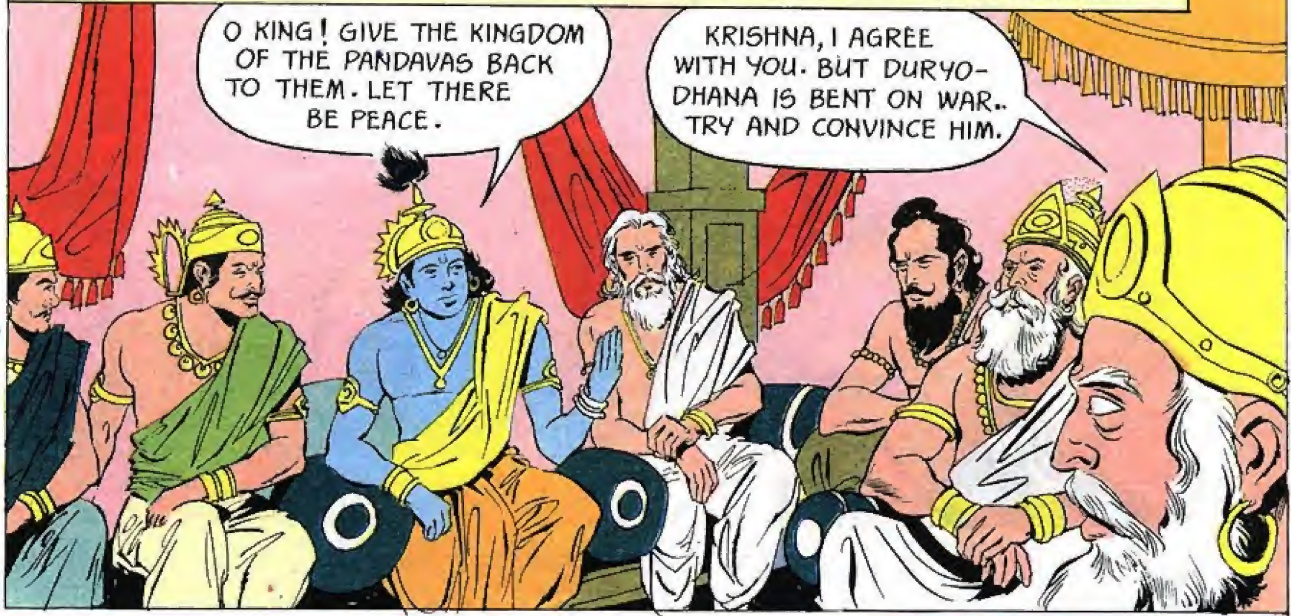
DURYODHANA SPURNED THE PEACE OFFER. THIS INFURIATED BHEEMA, THE SECOND AMONG THE PANDAVA BROTHERS.



KRISHNA INTERVENED.



KRISHNA WAS RECEIVED WITH DUE RESPECT AT THE COURT OF DHRTIRASHTRA.



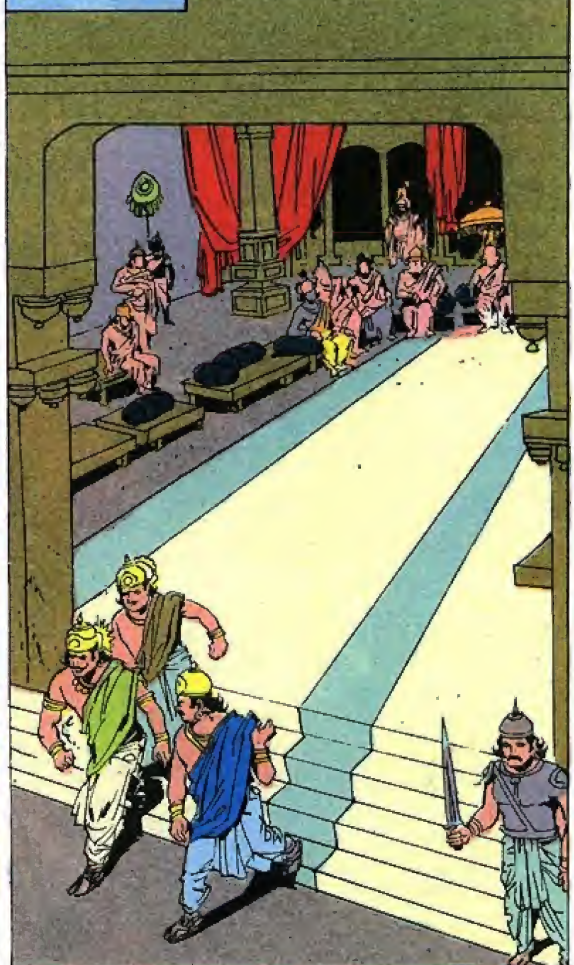
THEN DRONA, THE TEACHER OF BOTH, THE KAURAVAS AND THE PANDAVAS, ADDRESSED DURYODHANA.



DURYODHANA STOOD UP ANGRILY.



HE STORMED OUT OF THE ASSEMBLY, FOLLOWED BY DUHSHASANA AND SHAKUNI.



IN A SECLUDED SPOT, HE HELD HURRIED DISCUSSIONS WITH HIS UNCLE, SHAKUNI.

WE MUST SEIZE KRISHNA.

AN EXCELLENT IDEA! LET US POST ARMED MEN AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE ASSEMBLY HALL.

WHEN KING DHRITARASHTRA CAME TO KNOW OF HIS SON'S WICKED PLANS, HE SUMMONED HIM AT ONCE.

I HEAR YOU WANT TO SEIZE KRISHNA. IS IT TRUE?

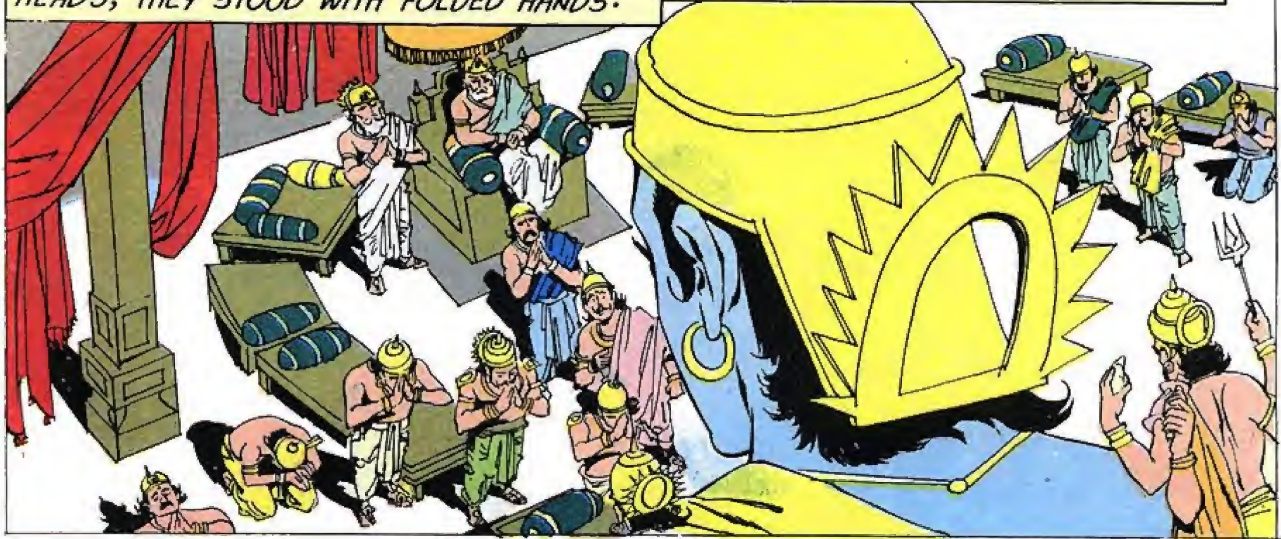
KRISHNA IMMEDIATELY ASSUMED A TERRIBLE FORM. FLASHES OF LIGHTNING BLAZED OUT OF HIM, AS HE LAUGHED.

HA HA!

I CAN'T BEAR TO SEE HIM.

IN HIS PERSON, YOU CAN SEE ALL THE GODS.

THE KINGS AND COUNSELLORS IN THE ASSEMBLY ALL SHUT THEIR EYES, BOWING THEIR HEADS, THEY STOOD WITH FOLDED HANDS.



SOON KRISHNA ASSUMED HIS NORMAL FORM.

I TAKE LEAVE OF YOU WITH A SAD HEART. I WILL TELL YUDHISHTHIRA THAT THE PEACE OFFER HAS BEEN REJECTED.

I AM SORRY. I HAVE NO CONTROL OVER MY SON.



BACK AT UPAPLAVYA, KRISHNA TOLD THE PANDAVA BROTHERS ABOUT THE WILFULNESS AND PERVERSITY OF DURYODHANA.



YUDHISHTHIRA, NOW THAT WE HAVE TRIED ALL PEACEFUL MEANS, THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO FIGHT. ALREADY THE KAURAVA ARMY HAS STARTED MOVING TOWARDS THE PLAINS OF KURUKSHETRA.

THEN LET IT BE WAR.

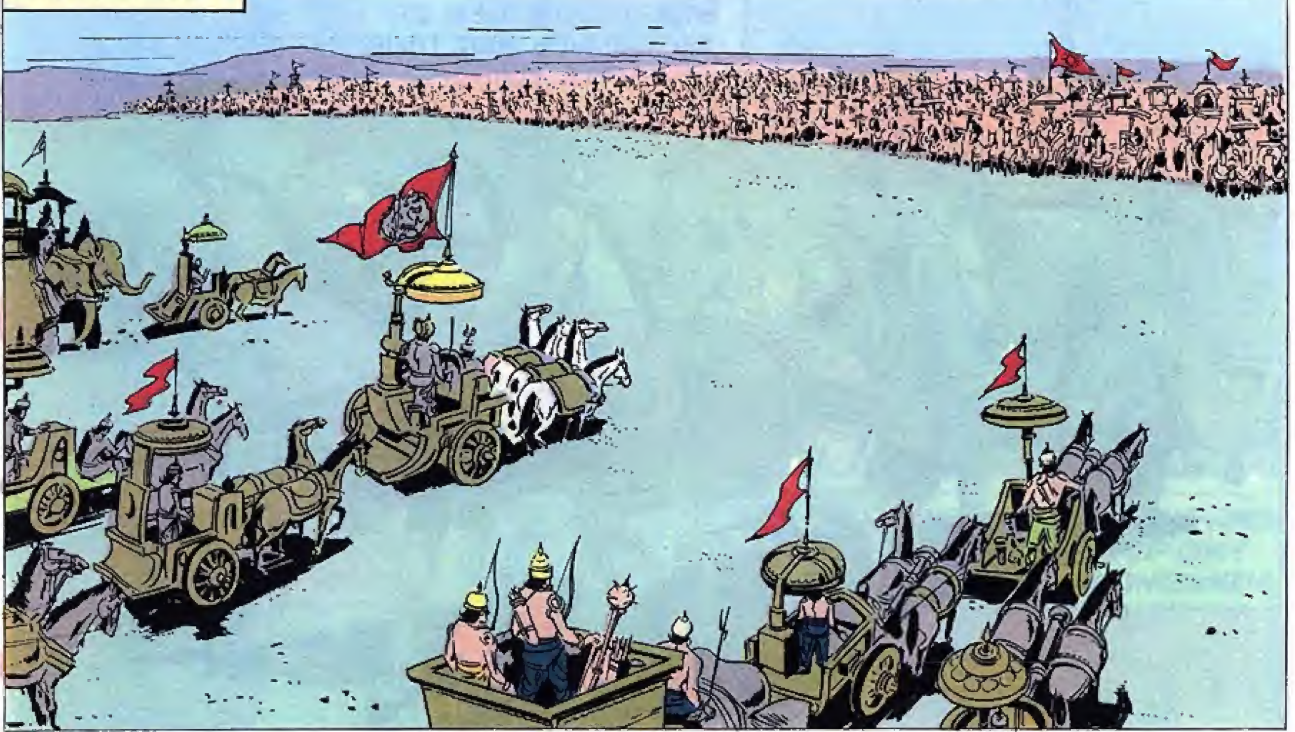
THE PANDAVA ARMY HAD SEVEN DIVISIONS. THERE WAS GREAT TUMULT AS THEY MOVED TOWARDS THE BATTLEFIELD OF KURUKSHETRA.



THE ARMIES OF THE PANDAVAS AND THE KAURAVAS STOOD FACING EACH OTHER ON THE BATTLEFIELD. BEFORE THE CALL FOR BATTLE WAS GIVEN, THE LEADERS OF THE TWO SIDES MET AND AGREED ON THE RULES OF WAR.



THE KAURAVA ARMY HAD ELEVEN DIVISIONS AND WAS THUS NUMERICALLY FAR SUPERIOR TO THE PANDAVA ARMY. TO WITHSTAND THE ENEMY ONSLAUGHT, THE PANDAVA ARMY HAD BEEN ARRAYED IN NEEDLE-LIKE FORMATION. ARJUNA WAS IN THE CENTRE IN HIS CHARIOT, TO WHICH HAD BEEN YOKED FOUR WHITE HORSES. KRISHNA WAS HIS CHARIOTEER.

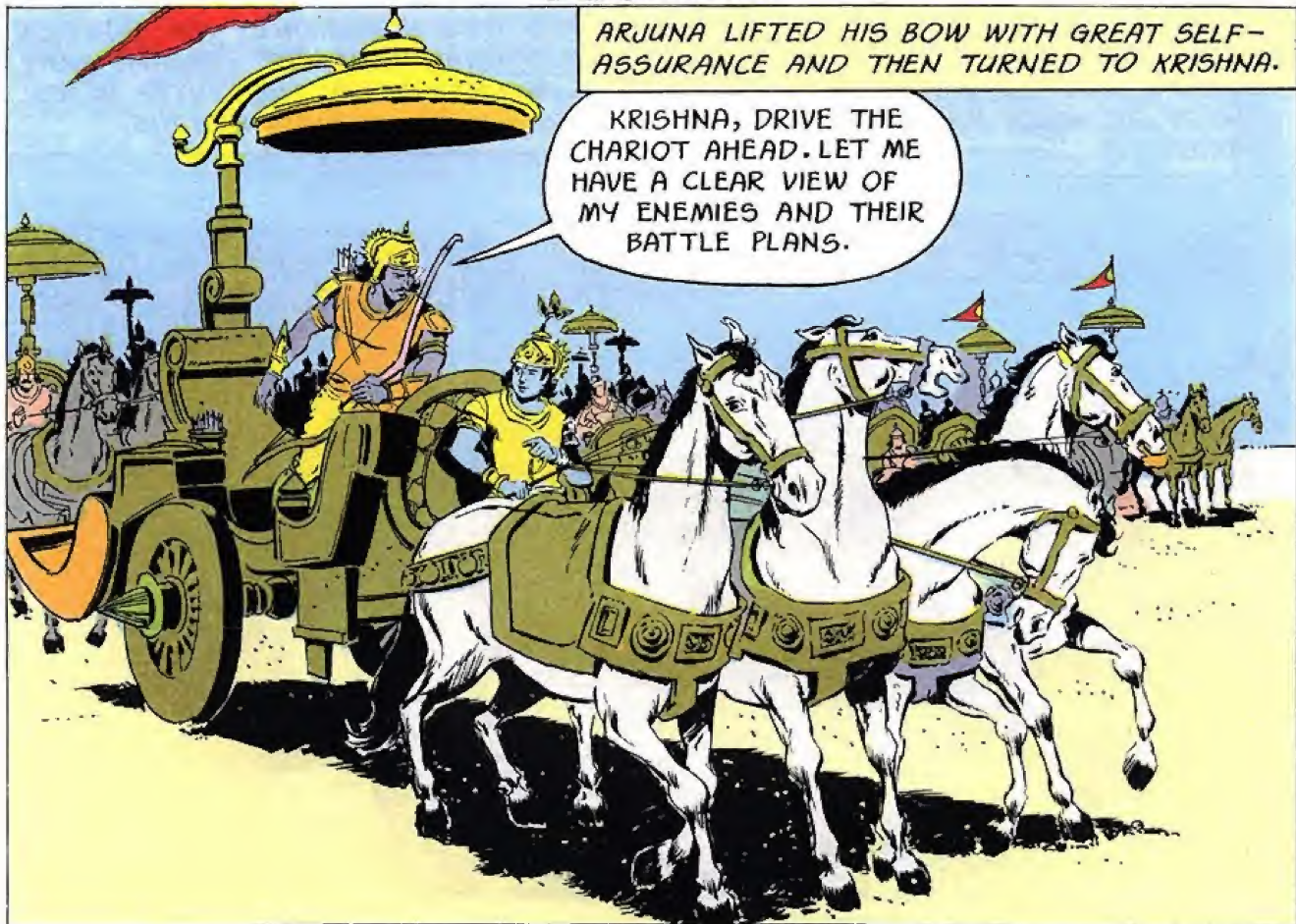


BHEESHMA WAS THE COMMANDER OF THE KAURAVA ARMY. HE BLEW HIS CONCH. THIS WAS A CALL TO HIS WARRIORS TO READY THEMSELVES FOR THE BATTLE.



ON THE OTHER SIDE, KRISHNA AND ARJUNA TOO BLEW THEIR CONCHES. THE AIR WAS RENT WITH THE SOUND OF THE BLOWING OF CONCHES, THE BEATING OF DRUMS, THE CLANK OF WEAPONS, THE TRUMPETING OF ELEPHANTS AND THE NEIGHING OF HORSES.



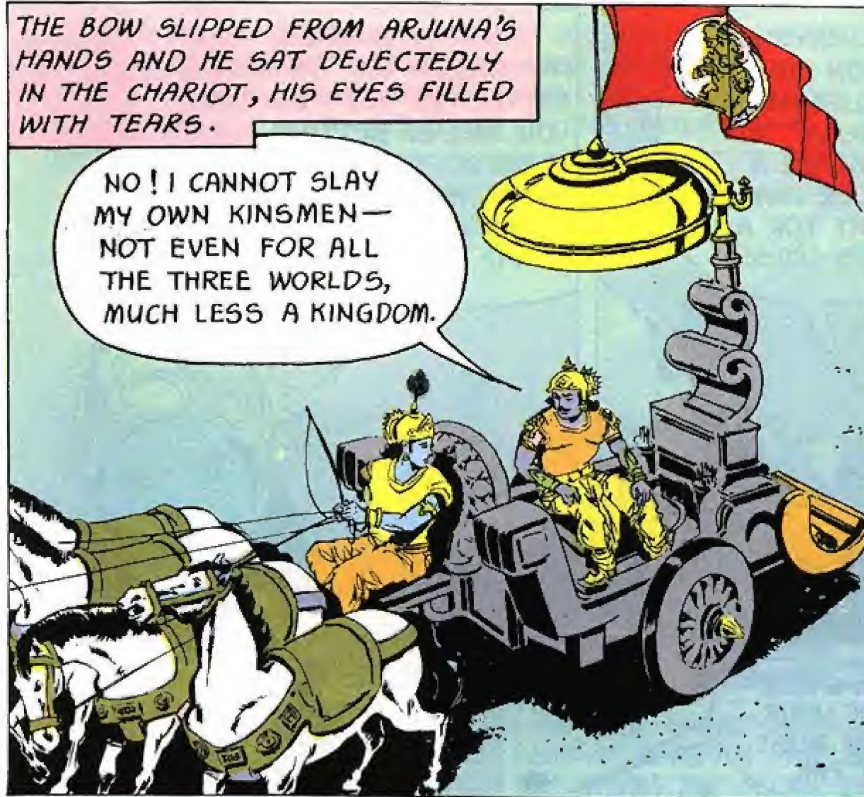


KRISHNA DROVE THE CHARIOT SOME DISTANCE AND THEN CAME TO A HALT IN THE CENTRE OF THE BATTLEFIELD. AS ARJUNA VIEWED THE OPPOSING ARMIES, A SUDDEN CHANGE CAME OVER HIS MIND. GONE WAS HIS SELF-ASSURANCE.



THE BOW SLIPPED FROM ARJUNA'S HANDS AND HE SAT DEJECTEDLY IN THE CHARIOT, HIS EYES FILLED WITH TEARS.

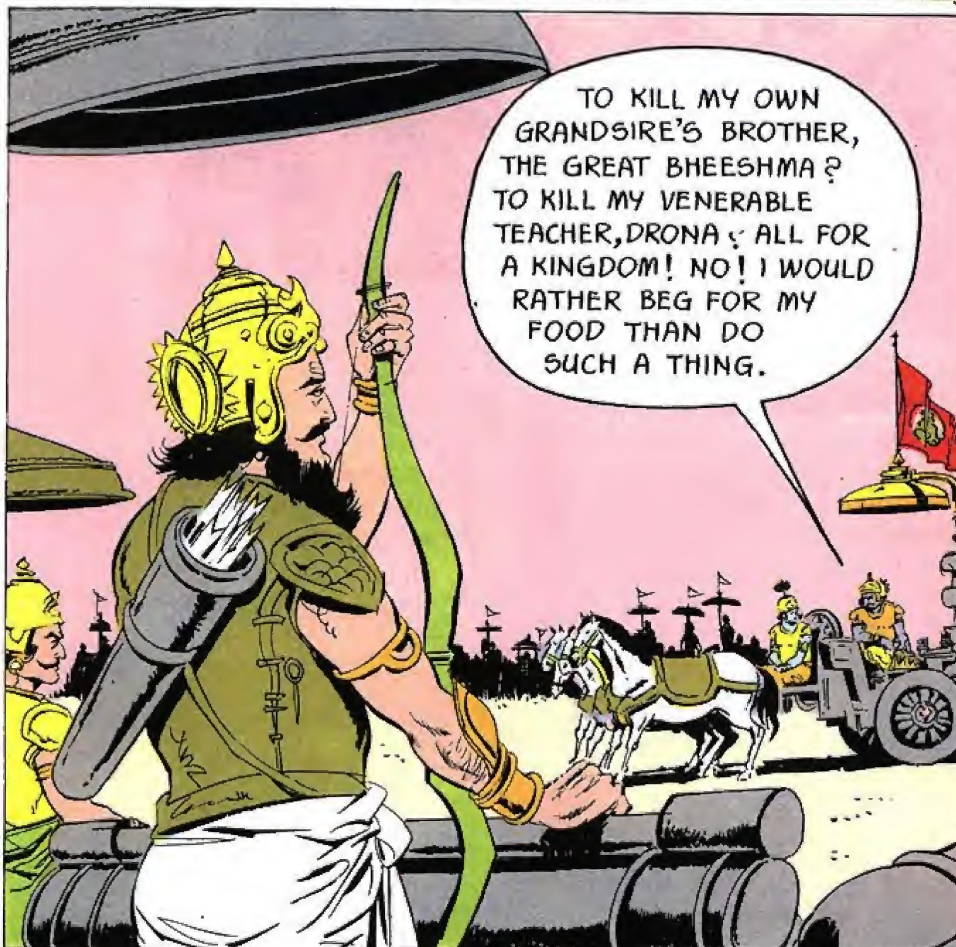
NO! I CANNOT SLAY MY OWN KINSMEN—NOT EVEN FOR ALL THE THREE WORLDS, MUCH LESS A KINGDOM.



THIS IS YOUR HOUR OF TRIAL, ARJUNA! SUCH BASE DESPAIR DOES NOT BECOME YOU. IT IS INAPPROPRIATE. THE CALL TO BATTLE HAS BEEN SOUNDED—ARISE! TAKE UP YOUR ARMS!

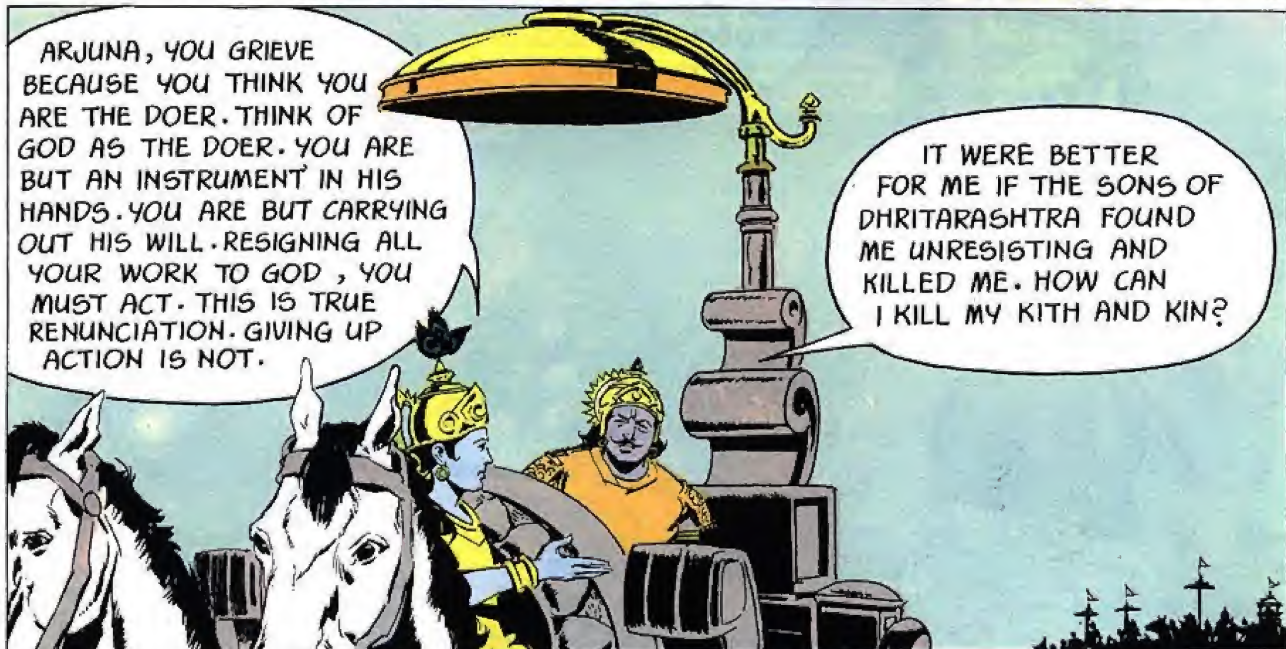
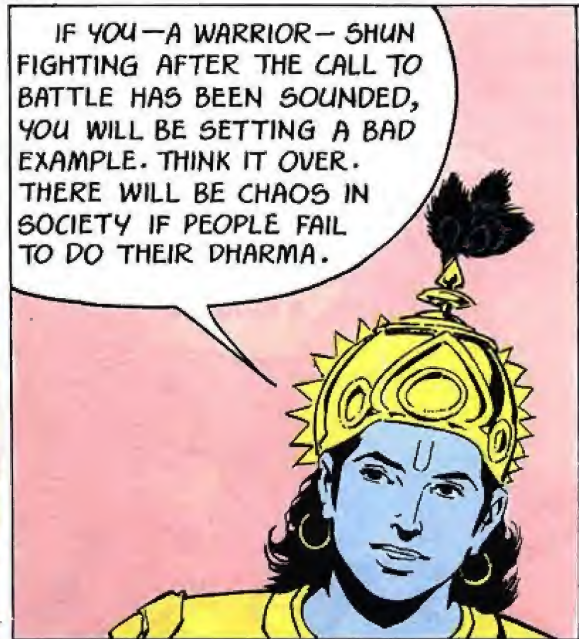


TO KILL MY OWN GRANDSIRE'S BROTHER, THE GREAT BHEESHMA? TO KILL MY VENERABLE TEACHER, DRONA? ALL FOR A KINGDOM! NO! I WOULD RATHER BEG FOR MY FOOD THAN DO SUCH A THING.



NO, KRISHNA! I CANNOT FIGHT.





ARJUNA, YOU CANNOT KILL BHEESHMA OR DRONA. NOR CAN YOU KILL DURYODHANA OR YOUR OTHER COUSINS.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN? WON'T MY ARROWS KILL THEM?



"IT IS ONLY THE BODY OF MAN THAT IS SUBJECT TO CHANGES LIKE ...

BIRTH...



... CHILDHOOD ...



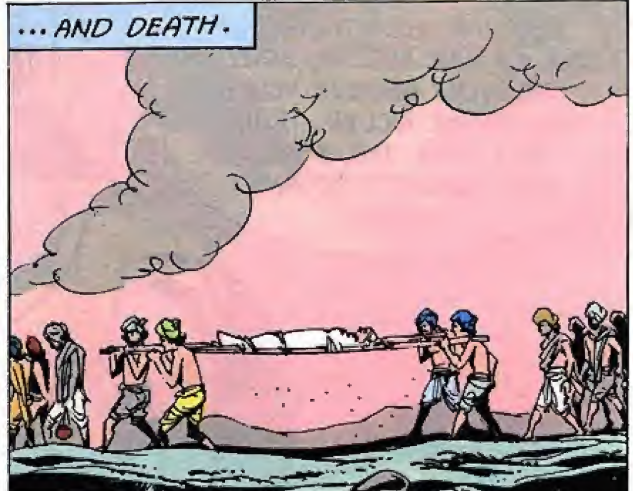
... YOUTH ...

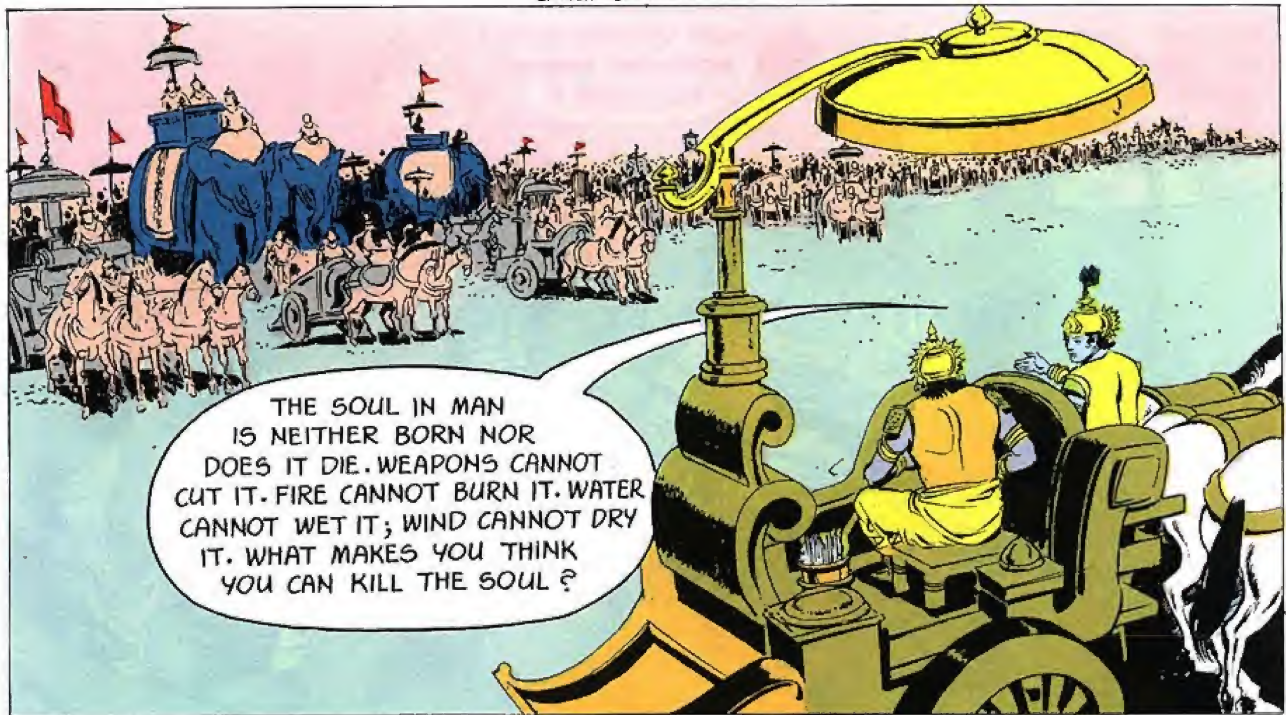


... OLD AGE ...



... AND DEATH.





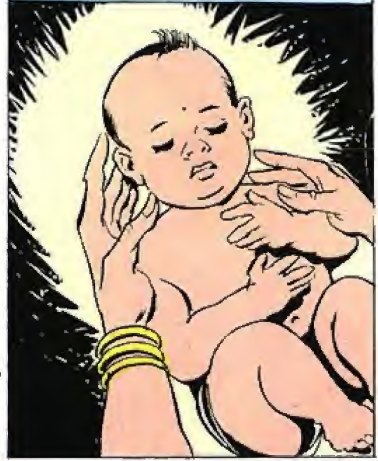
“JUST AS A MAN DISCARDS OLD CLOTHES AND WEARS NEW ONES...

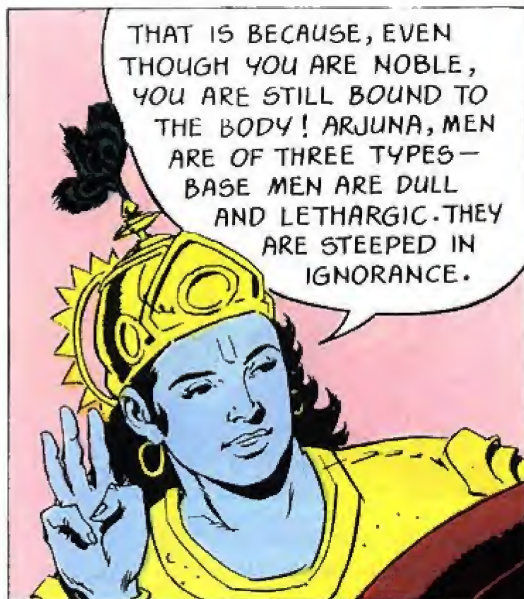


... THE ETERNAL SOUL SHEDS A DEAD BODY...



... AND ENTERS ANOTHER.

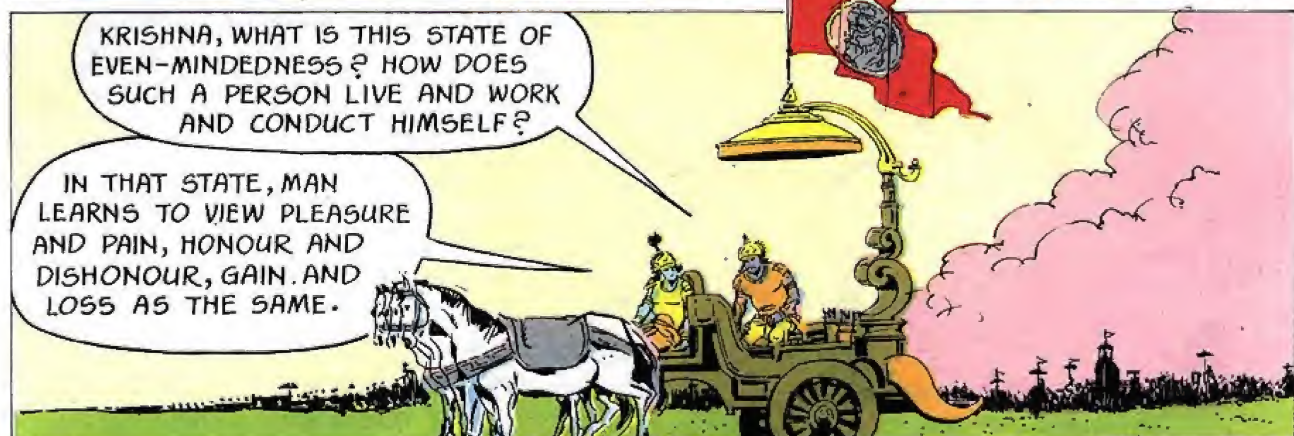




"THEN THERE ARE THE NOBLE ONES WHO SEEK ENLIGHTENMENT. THEY ARE EVER ENGAGED IN DOING GOOD DEEDS. BUT EVEN THEY ARE BOUND TO THE BODY. YOU ARE NO EXCEPTION."



"IT IS ONLY WHEN THE NOBLE ONES RECEIVE ENLIGHTENMENT THAT THE BONDS THAT TIE THE SOUL TO THE BODY ARE CUT AND THEY ATTAIN PERFECT EQUANIMITY OF MIND. THEY BECOME EVEN-MINDED.*"





"KNOWLEDGE IS LIKE FIRE. ANYTHING THAT ENTERS FIRE WILL NEVER REMAIN THE SAME. JUST AS FIRE TURNS ITS FUEL INTO ASHES, KNOWLEDGE BURNS AWAY ALL THE BONDS THAT TIE THE IMMORTAL SOUL TO THE MORTAL BODY.



* THIS IS REFERRED TO AS JNANA YOGA. YOGA LITERALLY MEANS UNION AND IS USED TO CONNOTE THE UNION OF THE SOUL WITH THE SUPREME SPIRIT.



"A BOAT CAN FLOAT STEADILY ON WATER ONLY IN THE ABSENCE OF STRONG WINDS. DESIRES ARE LIKE WINDS. THEY ROCK THE BOAT OF LIFE VIOLENTLY."



"IT IS ONLY WHEN ALL THE DESIRES OF THE HEART ARE ABANDONED THAT THE INTELLECT CAN PERCEIVE REALITY. AND IT IS ONLY AFTER PERCEIVING REALITY THAT A MAN CAN BECOME EVEN-MINDED."



"AN EVEN-MINDED PERSON DOES NOT SHUN ACTION. BUT HE IS NOT MOVED BY THE EFFECTS OF ACTION. HE IS LIKE THE OCEAN WHICH REMAINS UNAFFECTED BY THE POURING IN OF THE WATERS OF MIGHTY RIVERS."



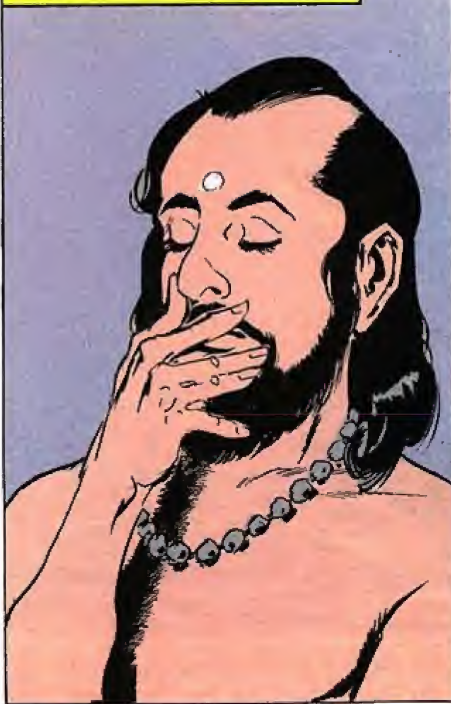
"THIS TRANQUILITY OF MIND CAN ALSO BE ACHIEVED BY THE YOGA OF MEDITATION *."



"THE ASPIRANT MUST FIND A QUIET SECLUDED PLACE. THERE HE MUST SIT ON A CLEAN SPOT AND HOLDING HIS HEAD, NECK AND BODY ERECT, HE MUST MEDITATE."



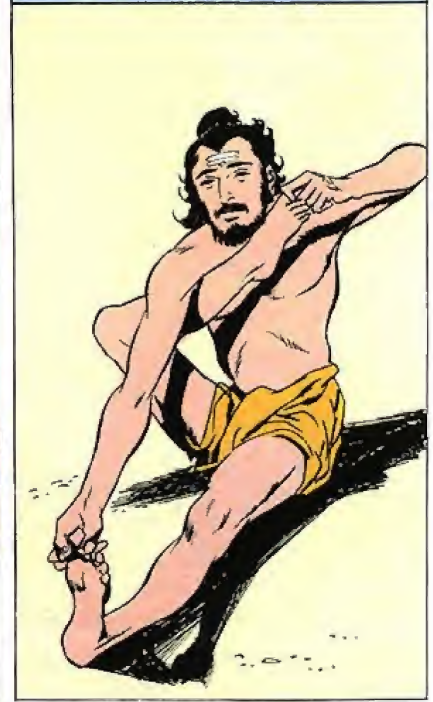
"CONTROL OF BREATH..."



"...EATING OF THE RIGHT FOOD AND..."



"...YOGIC EXERCISES HELP..."



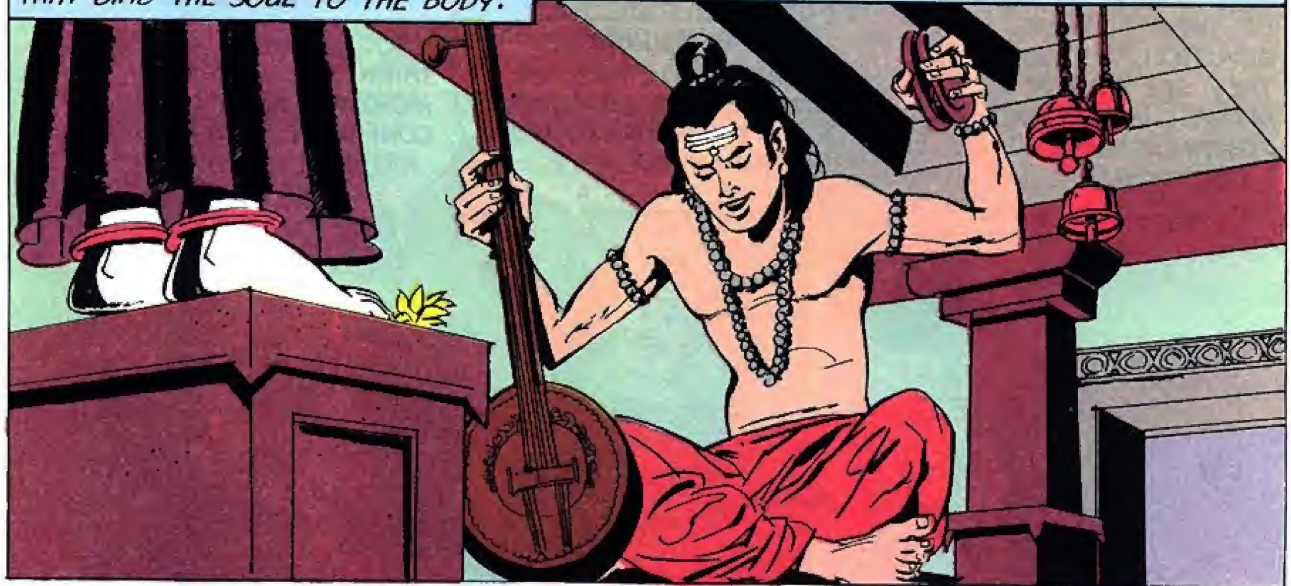
... BUT NO MEDITATION IS POSSIBLE WITHOUT CONCENTRATION, AND NO CONCENTRATION IS POSSIBLE IF THE MIND IS FULL OF DESIRES.



"THEREFORE THE YOGI SHOULD TRY TO WITHDRAW THE MIND FROM WORLDLY THINGS AND MAKE IT DWELL ON THE SELF."



"TO PERCEIVE THE TRUTH THROUGH THE INTELLECT IS DIFFICULT. THE YOGA OF MEDITATION IS ALSO DIFFICULT. THE YOGA OF DEVOTION—WORSHIP, ADORATION, PRAYER, SURRENDERING YOURSELF TO THE WILL OF GOD—IS THE SIMPLEST WAY BY WHICH YOU CAN CUT THE TIES THAT BIND THE SOUL TO THE BODY.



"THERE ARE FOUR TYPES OF DEVOTEES. THERE ARE THOSE WHO WORSHIP GOD WHEN IN DISTRESS.



"THERE ARE THOSE WHO WORSHIP GOD FOR THE SAKE OF MATERIAL GAIN.



"THERE ARE THE NOBLE ONES WHO WORSHIP GOD ONLY TO RECEIVE ENLIGHTENMENT...



* BHAKTI YOGA. ANYONE WHO HAS PERCEIVED THE SELF THROUGH THE INTELLECT CANNOT HELP ADORING THE SELF. THEREFORE THE YOGA OF BHAKTI OR DEVOTION IS NOT INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE YOGA OF INTELLECT.

...AND FINALLY A FEW NOBLE ONES, BECAUSE OF THEIR INTENSE DEVOTION, SEE GOD. THEY SEE GOD IN ALL AND ALL IN GOD AND CONTINUE THEIR DEVOTION.



MEANWHILE, ARJUNA'S APATHY AND DESPAIR HAD CAST A GLOOM ON THE PANDAVA ARMY.

WHY IS ARJUNA SO DEJECTED? HAS THE NUMERICAL SUPERIORITY OF THE KAURAVA ARMY UNNERVED HIM?

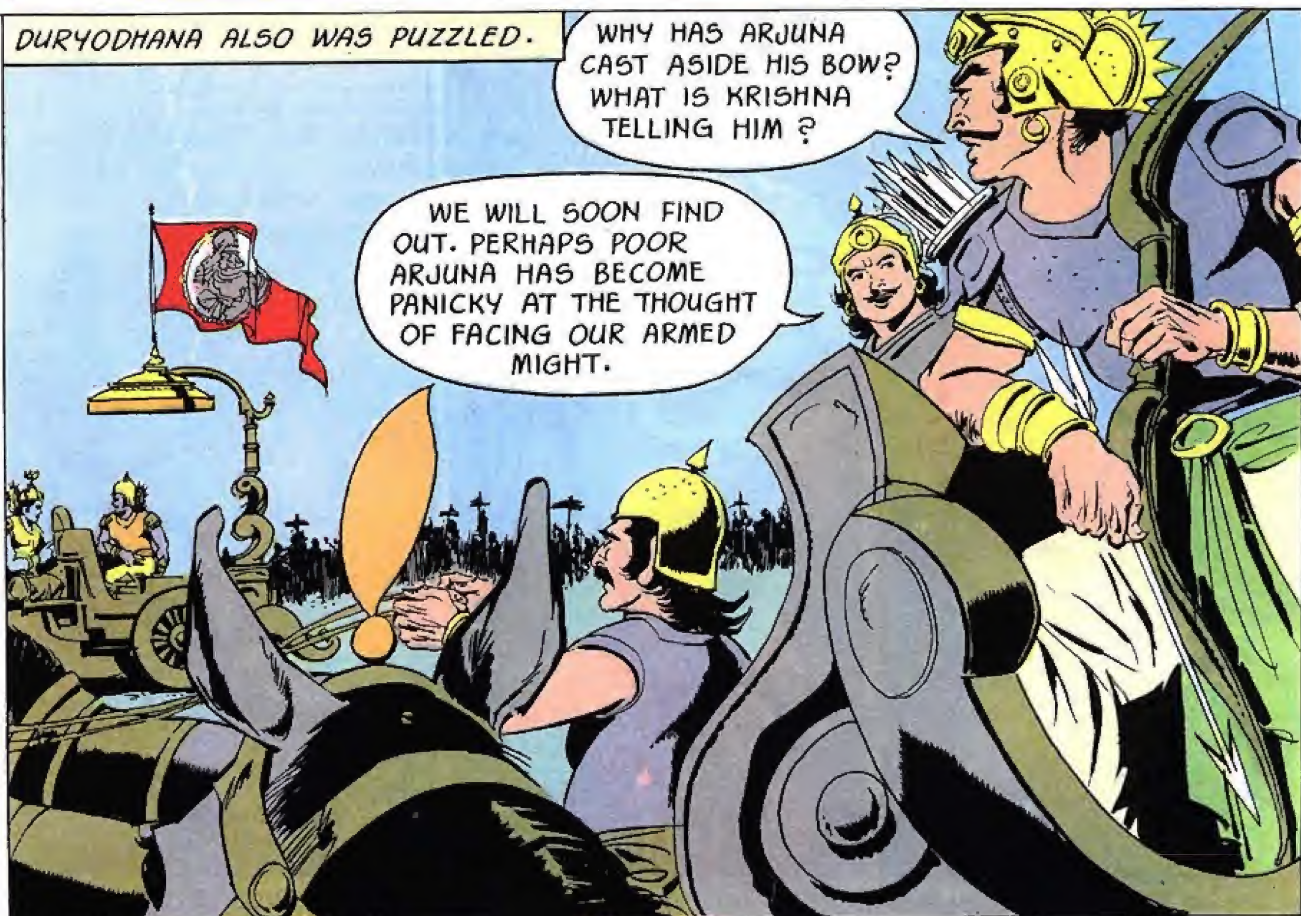
NO, BHEEMA. I DON'T THINK SO. ONLY THIS MORNING HE TOLD ME CONFIDENTLY THAT WHERE KRISHNA IS, THERE IS VICTORY.



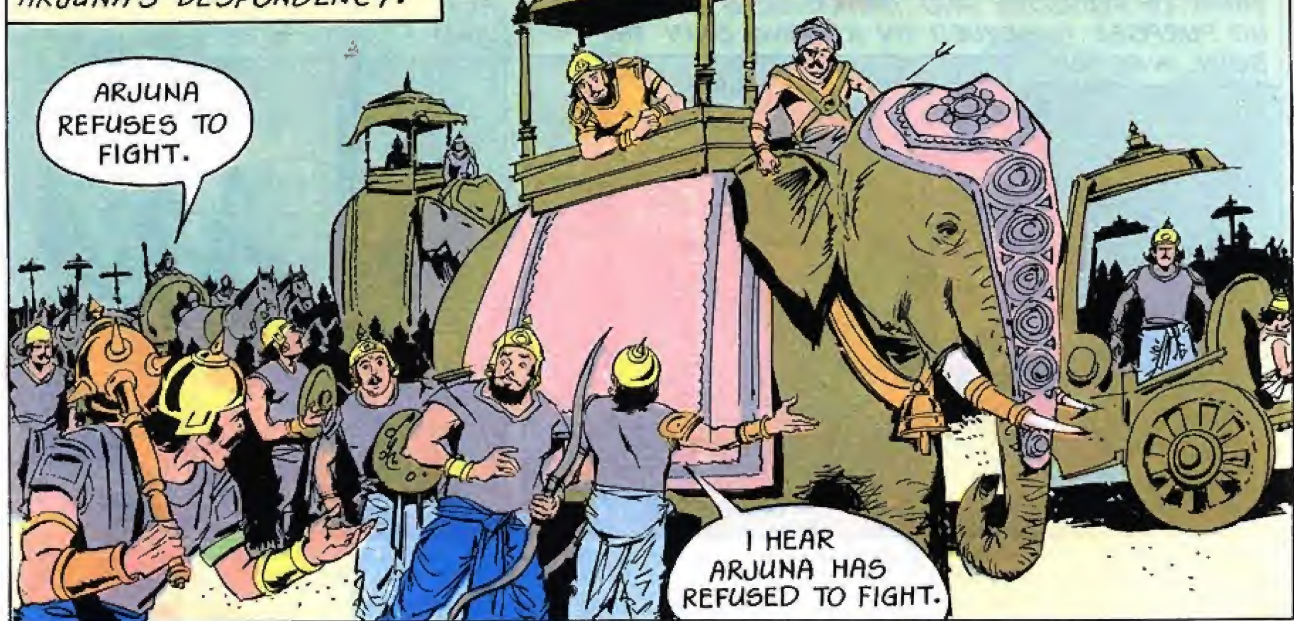
DURYODHANA ALSO WAS PUZZLED.

WHY HAS ARJUNA CAST ASIDE HIS BOW? WHAT IS KRISHNA TELLING HIM?

WE WILL SOON FIND OUT. PERHAPS POOR ARJUNA HAS BECOME PANICKY AT THE THOUGHT OF FACING OUR ARMED MIGHT.



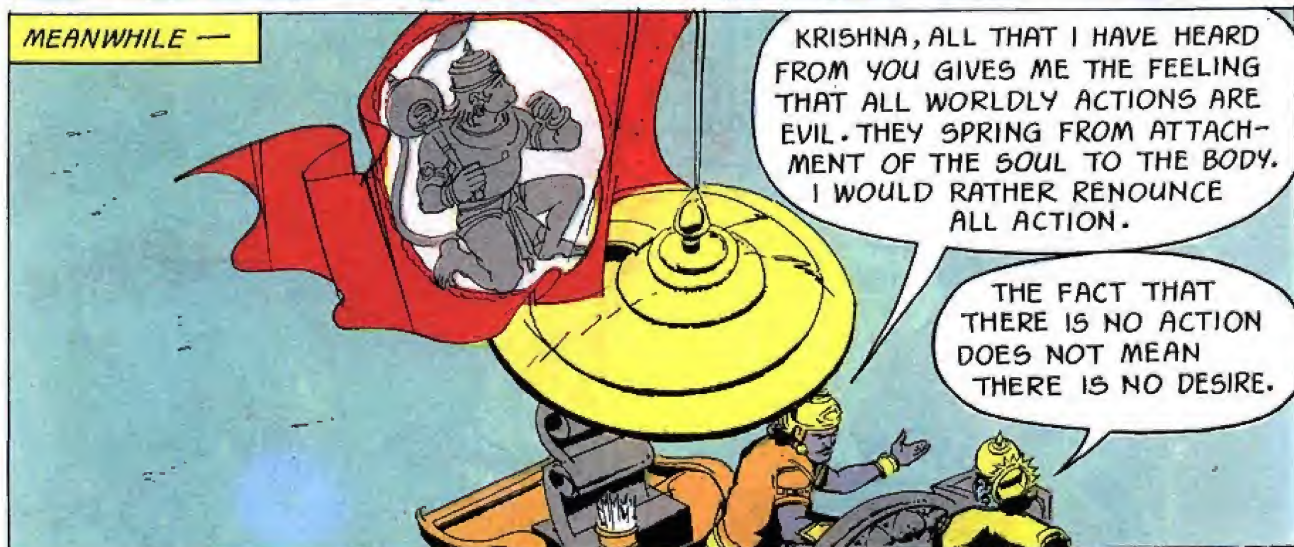
THE KAURAVAS SOON LEARNT THROUGH ONE OF THEIR MESSENGERS ABOUT ARJUNA'S DESPONDENCY.



DURYODHANA WAS ELATED.



MEANWHILE —



"A MAN SITTING IN SOLITUDE MAY CONTINUE TO THINK OF PLEASURE AND THE OBJECTS OF PLEASURE. NO PURPOSE IS SERVED BY KEEPING ONLY THE BODY INACTIVE."



"BESIDES, MEN OFTEN SHUN ACTION BECAUSE OF LETHARGY AND NEGLIGENCE."



ACT YOU MUST, ARJUNA. NO ONE INDEED, CAN KEEP ALOOF FROM ACTION. EVEN THE SURVIVAL OF THE BODY CALLS FOR ACTION.

BUT KRISHNA, BECAUSE OF MY ACTION OR THOSE OF OTHERS, I SOMETIMES FEEL HAPPY, SOMETIMES MISERABLE, SOMETIMES ANGRY AND EVEN TENSE.



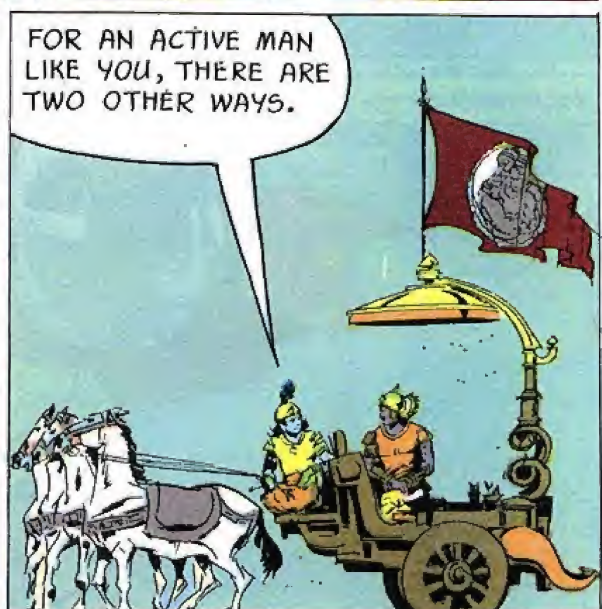
THESE ARE THE USUAL EFFECTS OF ACTION. BUT THERE ARE A NUMBER OF WAYS BY WHICH YOU CAN ACT AND YET BE FREE.

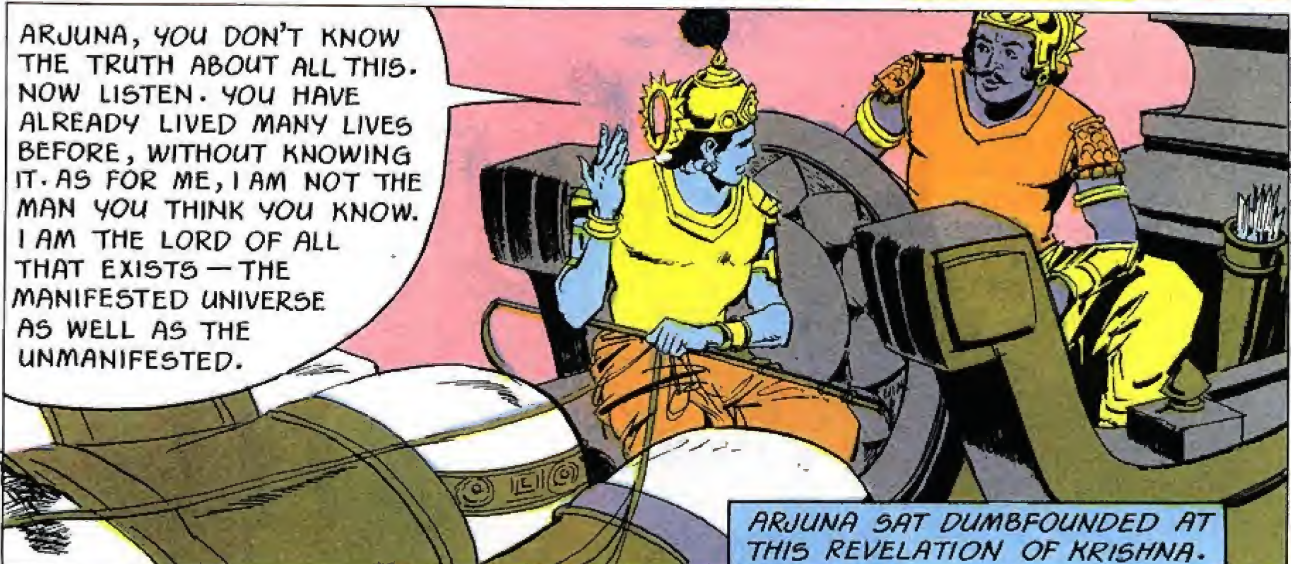
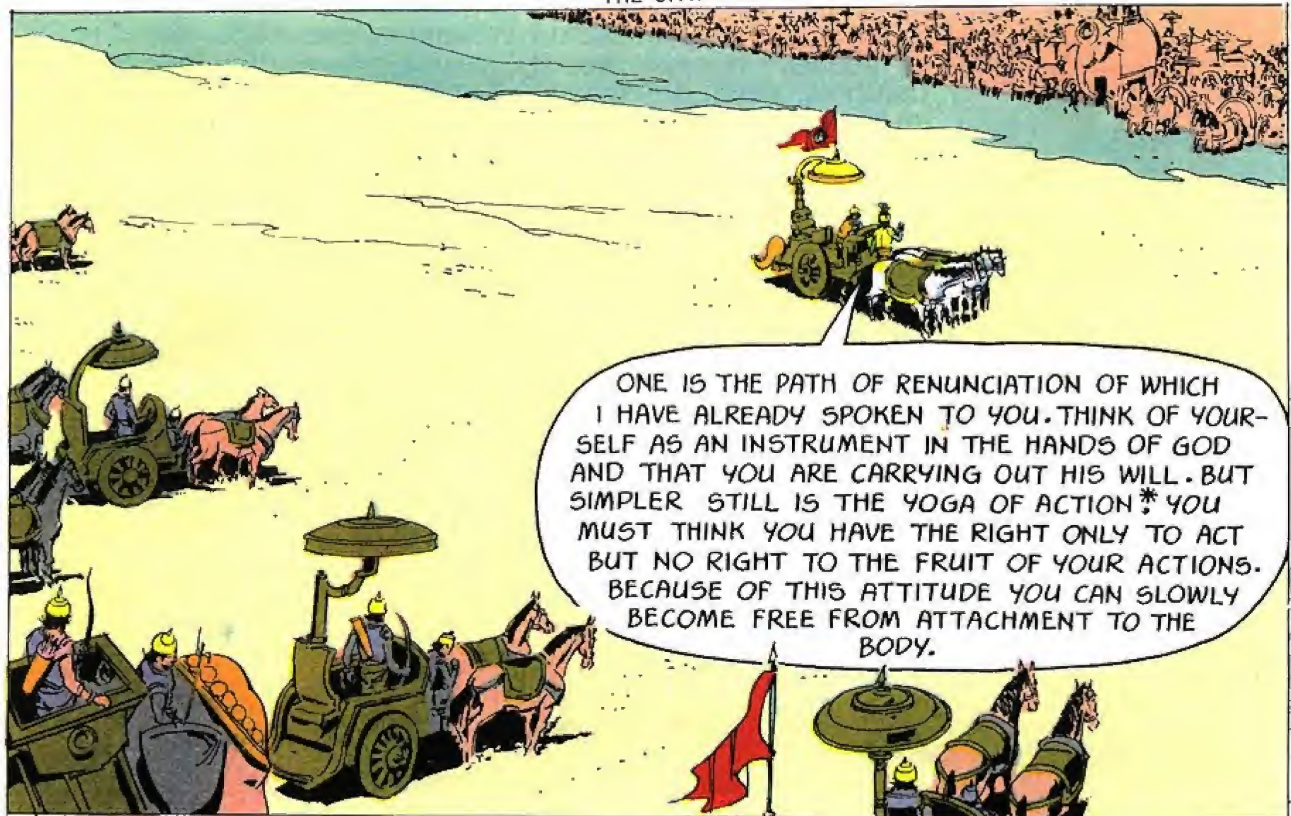


BY YOGA OF INTELLECT, MEDITATION AND DEVOTION, YOU CAN BE FREE FROM THE EFFECTS OF ACTION.



FOR AN ACTIVE MAN LIKE YOU, THERE ARE TWO OTHER WAYS.





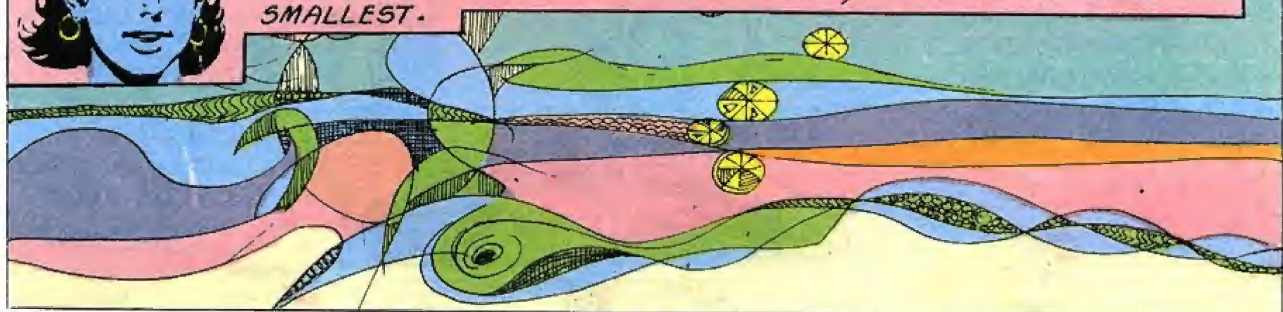


AT THE END OF THOUSANDS OF AEONS,* THE MANIFESTED UNIVERSE MERGES INTO THE UNMANIFESTED. AGAIN IT SPRINGS FORTH FROM THERE AFTER THOUSANDS OF AEONS. I PERVADE THE MANIFESTED AS WELL AS THE UNMANIFESTED UNIVERSE AND AM SUBTLER THAN BOTH.

ARJUNA, WHENEVER THERE IS A DECLINE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND A RISE OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS, I INCARNATE ON THIS EARTH TO PROTECT THE GOOD AND TO DESTROY THE EVIL.

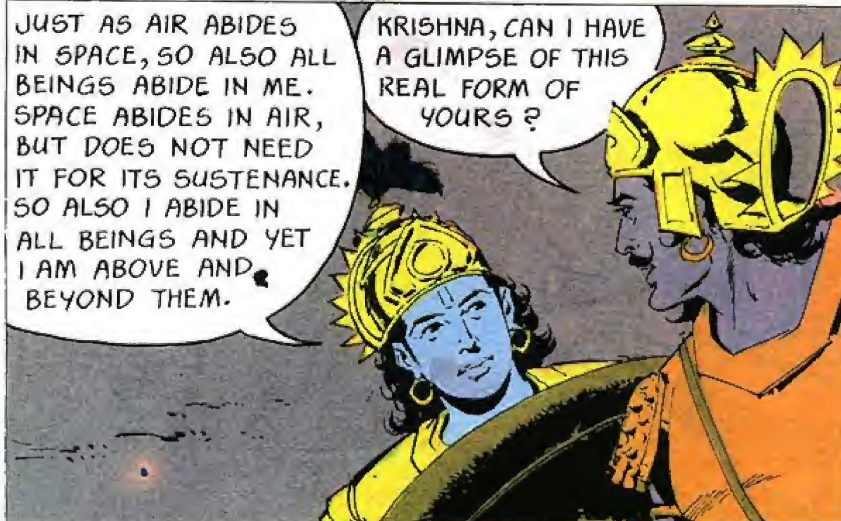


"I AM ONE, INDIVISIBLE AND ETERNAL. I AM EVERYWHERE. I AM THE ALL KNOWING. I AM WITHOUT BEGINNING AND END. I AM BEYOND TIME. I AM BIGGER THAN THE BIGGEST; I AM SMALLER THAN THE SMALLEST.



JUST AS AIR ABIDES IN SPACE, SO ALSO ALL BEINGS ABIDE IN ME. SPACE ABIDES IN AIR, BUT DOES NOT NEED IT FOR ITS SUSTENANCE. SO ALSO I ABIDE IN ALL BEINGS AND YET I AM ABOVE AND BEYOND THEM.

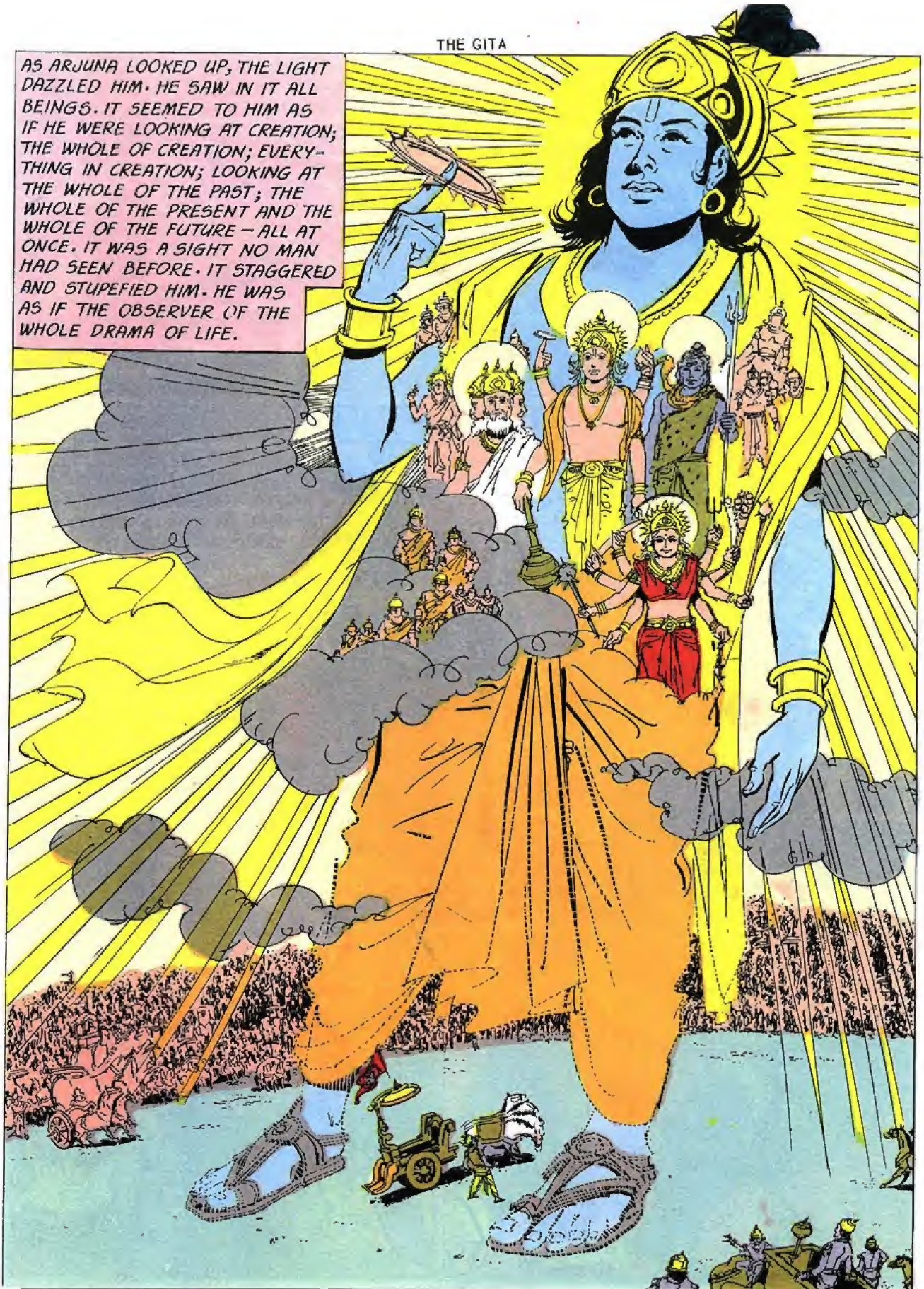
KRISHNA, CAN I HAVE A GLIMPSE OF THIS REAL FORM OF YOURS?



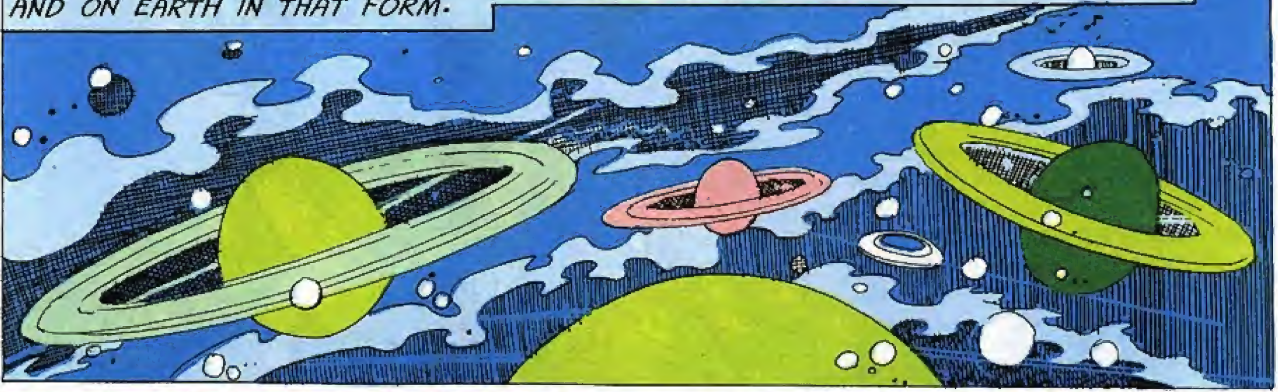
IT IS A FORM YOU CANNOT SEE WITH ORDINARY NAKED EYES. YOU NEED DIVINE VISION. I BESTOW IT ON YOU.



AS ARJUNA LOOKED UP, THE LIGHT DAZZLED HIM. HE SAW IN IT ALL BEINGS. IT SEEMED TO HIM AS IF HE WERE LOOKING AT CREATION; THE WHOLE OF CREATION; EVERYTHING IN CREATION; LOOKING AT THE WHOLE OF THE PAST; THE WHOLE OF THE PRESENT AND THE WHOLE OF THE FUTURE - ALL AT ONCE. IT WAS A SIGHT NO MAN HAD SEEN BEFORE. IT STAGGERED AND STUPEFIED HIM. HE WAS AS IF THE OBSERVER OF THE WHOLE DRAMA OF LIFE.



HE ALSO SAW THE TWELVE SUNS, THE MOON AND THE STARS. IT WAS AN ENDLESS PANORAMA. IF THERE WERE ANY LIMITATIONS, THEY WERE NOT IN THE FORM THAT HE BEHELD, BUT IN THE VIEWER — IN HIMSELF. HE SAW ALL CREATURES ON HEAVEN AND ON EARTH IN THAT FORM.



ARJUNA, STRUCK WITH AMAZEMENT, BOWED BEFORE THE LORD.



I SEE YOU, INFINITE AND OMNIPRESENT. YOU ARE BEGINNING-LESS AND ENDLESS. IN YOU THE WHOLE UNIVERSE ABIDES. SALUTATIONS TO YOU.

THE LORD THEN ASSUMED HIS NORMAL FORM.



DO NOT BE AFRAID, O ARJUNA. YOU HAVE SEEN THIS FORM OF MINE, WHICH IS INDEED VERY DIFFICULT TO SEE.

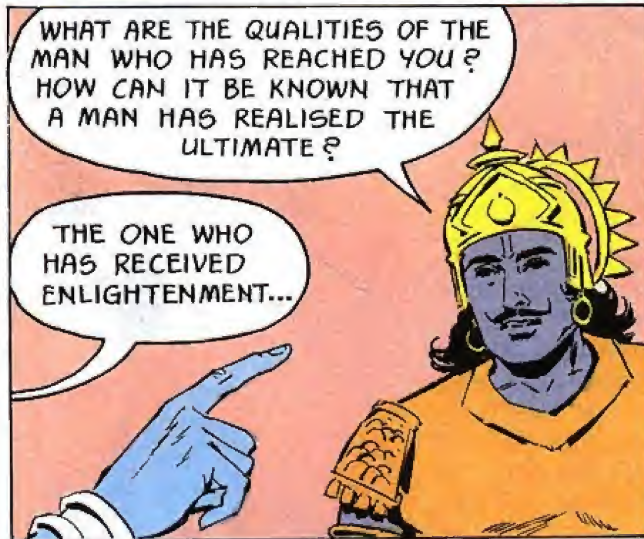
IF YOU ARE PERPLEXED BY THE MANY CONFLICTING THEORIES THAT YOU HAVE HEARD, ABANDONING ALL, SEEK REFUGE IN ME.



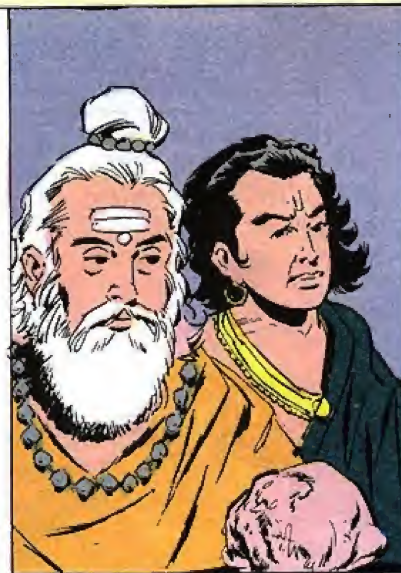
HE WHO WORKS FOR ME, HE WHO LOOKS UPON ME AS HIS GOAL, AND HE WHO WORSHIPS ME, SOON BECOMES FREE FROM ATTACHMENT TO THE BODY AND COMES TO ME.

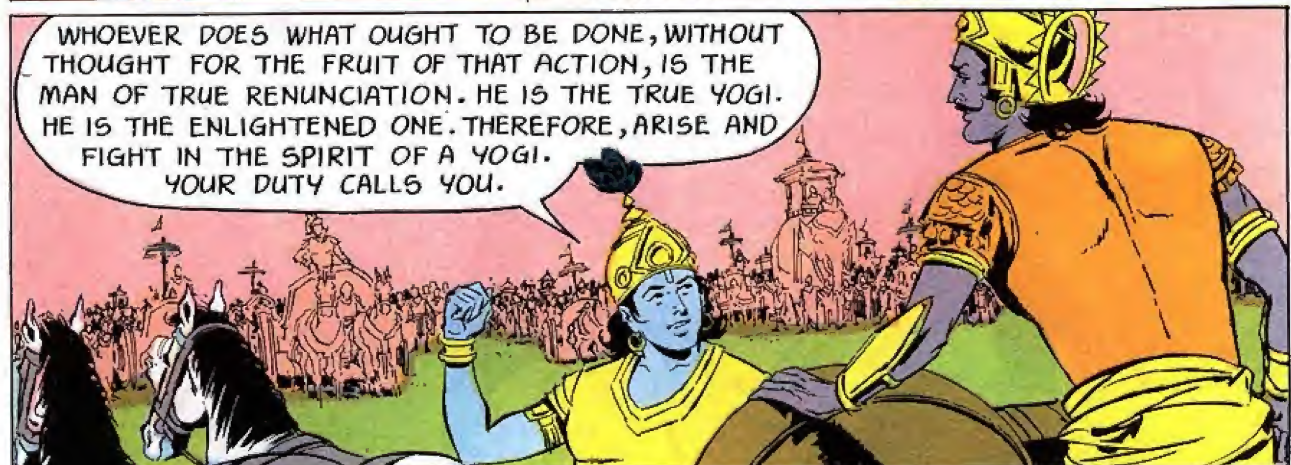
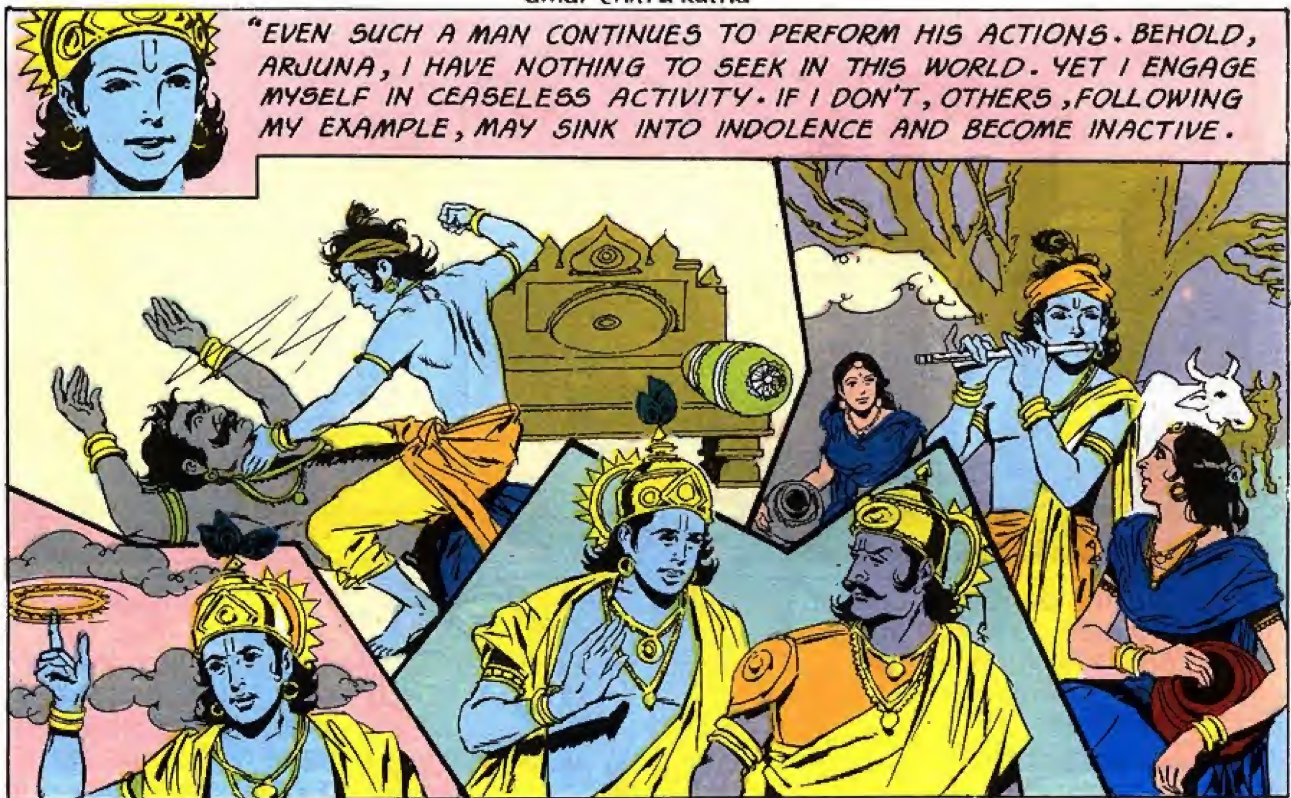


"MEN OF DIFFERENT FAITHS WORSHIP ME IN DIFFERENT FORMS FOR THE FULFILMENT OF THEIR DESIRES. ULTIMATELY, THEY ALL COME TO ME."



"A PIECE OF GOLD, A CLOD AND A STONE ARE THE SAME TO HIM."





ARJUNA NOW SAW CLEARLY WHERE HIS DUTY LAY.

LORD, I STAND
HERE WITH ALL
MY DOUBTS
CLEARED.
I WILL DO AS
YOU BID.



ARJUNA LIFTED THE GANDIVA BOW...



... AND ITS TWANG WAS HEARD AS FAR AS WHERE YUDHISHTHIRA STOOD.

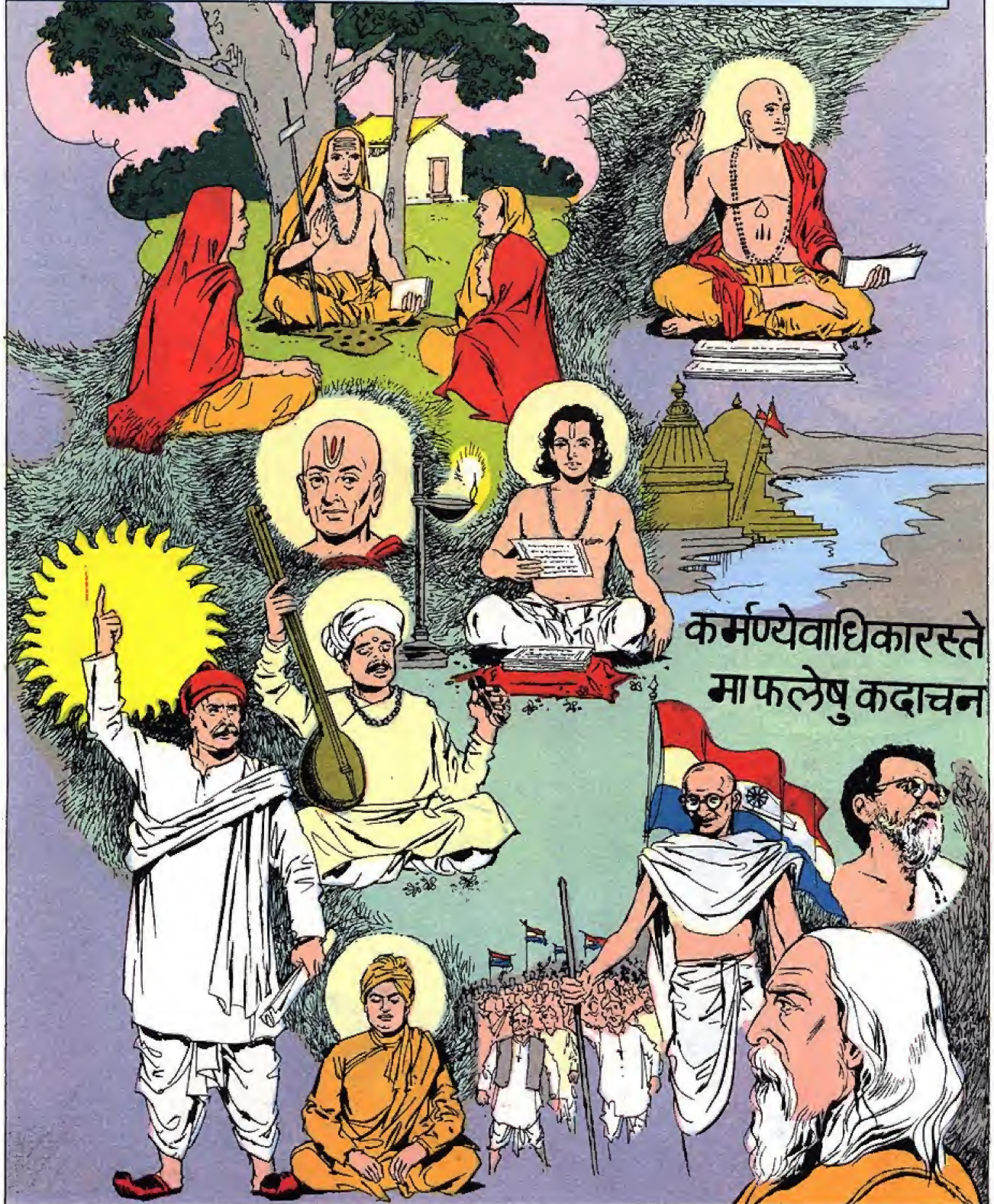
VICTORY BE TO KRISHNA!
ARJUNA WILL DO HIS
DUTY AS A WARRIOR! HE
HAS RESOLVED TO
FIGHT! ALL IS WELL.

ARJUNA HAS
TAKEN UP
ARMS!

ARJUNA
HAS RISEN
TO FIGHT!



GREAT WAS THE BATTLE THAT FOLLOWED, IN WHICH THE KAURAVAS WERE TOTALLY ANNIHILATED. THE INCIDENTS OF THE KURUKSHETRA BATTLE ARE RECOUNTED IN ALL THEIR GLORIOUS DETAIL TO THIS DAY. BUT MORE MEMORABLE STILL WAS THE DISCOURSE THAT LORD KRISHNA GAVE TO ARJUNA, WHICH HAS INSTRUCTED, ENLIGHTENED AND INSPIRED INDIANS DOWN THE AGES.





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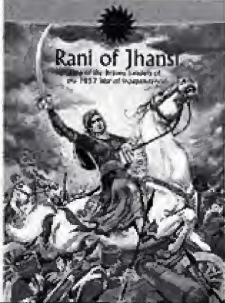
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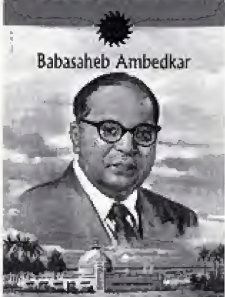
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